

# JUST THE FACTS – 2019

Seattle Public Utilities  
\$1.2 billion annual budget - 1,414 employees  
Four lines of business

## DRINKING WATER

### Facts and Figures

- 1.5 million people live in areas receiving water from SPU
- 124 million gallons used per day on average
- 56 million gallons (45%) sold per day to retail customers
- 63 million gallons (51%) sold per day to wholesale customers
- 5 million gallons (4%) per day of non-revenue water
- 1,823 miles of pipeline
- 31 billion gallons of water supply storage at 2 mountain reservoirs
- 325 million gallons of treated water storage
- 3 groundwater wells

### Business Structure

- We sell water in Seattle (and areas to the north and south) directly to 170,000 residential accounts as well as 27,500 commercial and fire accounts. We call this Retail water.
- We also sell water to the Cascade Water Alliance and 18 other utilities who then distribute the water to their residential, commercial, and other customers. We call this Wholesale water.

### Revenue

- Total 2019 revenue \$287.9 million
  - Direct service revenue: \$214.2 million
  - Wholesale revenue: \$57 million
  - Other revenue: \$16.7 million

### Water in Seattle

**From:** Cedar River (60% of water supplied), South Fork Tolt River (40% of water supplied), and wells...

**To:** To Seattle city households and businesses, and to suburban cities and water districts.

### Major Capital Projects

**Total Water adopted budget: approx. \$117 million**

- Watermain replacement and rehabilitation
- Transportation-related utility projects
- \$559.8 million in capital projects planned (2019-2024)

### Major Regulators

- Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Department of Ecology, State and Federal fish and wildlife management agencies

### History

- In 1889, the Seattle Water Department was created.
- In 1901, Seattle began supplying water from Cedar River.
- In 1964, Seattle began supplying water from South Fork Tolt River.

### Interesting Facts

- SPU owns 99.8% of the Cedar River watershed above the Landsburg diversion dam and 68.8% of the watershed above the South Fork Tolt Dam; the US Forest Service owns the rest.
- No agricultural, industrial or recreational activities are allowed in the watersheds.
- Water treatment includes screening, ozonation, corrosion control, fluoridation and chlorination at the Tolt and the Cedar treatment plants, plus filtration at the Tolt plant and ultraviolet light at the Cedar plant.
- SPU operates a large State-certified water quality laboratory.

## SOLID WASTE

### Facts and Figures

- 134,816 commercial garbage tons disposed
- 109,367 residential garbage tons disposed
- 101,506 self-haul garbage tons disposed
- 56.9% citywide recycling rate (2018)
- 73.5% single family sector recycling rate (2018)
- 168,459 single-family households
- 6,724 residential multifamily premises
- 195,188 residential multifamily accounts
- 168,459 residential single-family accounts
- 8,555 commercial garbage accounts
- 333,663 vehicle trips at city transfer stations

### Business Structure

- We contract with two private haulers to collect residential garbage, recycling and organics (food and yard waste). Independent private haulers compete for commercial recycling and food waste collection.
- We operate two household hazardous waste facilities and two garbage, recycling and organics transfer stations. We contract with three private processors for recycling and organics.
- We contract with a private landfill for garbage disposal.

### Revenue

- Total 2019 revenue: \$225 million
  - Direct service revenue: \$138.7 million
  - Commercial revenue: \$66.2 million
  - Other revenue: \$20.1 million

### Solid Waste in Seattle

**From:** Households and businesses via transfer stations and local recycling sorting facility.

**To:** Regional composting facilities, local and international recycling markets, and a landfill in Arlington, Oregon.

### Major Capital Projects

**Total Solid Waste adopted budget: \$8.5 million**

- North Transfer Station punch list projects
- New South Recycling & Disposal Station Redevelopment Center
- South Park Landfill cleanup
- \$101.9 million in capital projects planned (2019-2024)

### Major Regulators

- Washington State Department of Ecology, Oregon State Department of Environmental Quality, Public Health Seattle and King County, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### History

- In 1961, the Solid Waste Fund was established.
- In 1989, Seattle began curbside residential recycling and yard waste collection was started.
- In 2005, Seattle added food waste to curbside yard waste collection
- In 1988, Seattle banned yard waste from the garbage; in 2005, recyclables from the garbage; in 2015, food waste from the garbage in 2015

### Interesting Facts

- Residential customers receive bi-weekly recycling and weekly garbage and organics collection on the same day of the week.
- Garbage and organic waste container rates vary by container size.
- The fee for dumping garbage at City transfer stations: \$145/ton.
- Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and Moderate Risk Waste (MRW) are managed through our Local Hazardous Waste Management Program with King County and two Seattle HHW collection/drop off sites.

# WASTEWATER

## Facts and Figures

- 368 miles of sanitary sewers
- 1,052 miles of sewers that collect both stormwater and wastewater (“combined sewers”)
- 14,000 catch basins that convey stormwater into combined sewers
- 67 Pump Stations
- 5.5 miles of wastewater force mains
- 84 combined sewer overflow (CSO) outfalls
- 42 combined sewage detention tanks/pipes

## Business Structure

- The City has a consent decree with the US Department of Justice (DOJ), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to control CSOs and reduce sewer overflows.
- We have a long-term contract with King County to treat Seattle’s wastewater.
- All residential and commercial side sewers are privately owned.

## Revenue and Rates

- Wastewater Service Revenue in 2019: \$146.3 million
- Charges are based on actual water usage.
- Charges appear on SPU’s monthly and bi-monthly utility bills.

## Wastewater in Seattle

**From:** Households and businesses...

**To:** Two of King County’s regional wastewater treatment plants and the Southwest Suburban Sewer District’s Salmon Creek wastewater treatment plant in Burien.

## Major Capital Projects

**Total Wastewater adopted budget: \$132.6 million**

- Ship Canal Water Quality Project
- Pearl Street Sewer Overflow Improvements
- Pump Station 22 Retrofit and Force Main Replacement
- East Montlake Pump Station and Force Main Improvements
- Wastewater Pipe Rehabilitation
- \$1.05 billion in Capital Projects planned (2019-2024)

## Major Regulators

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Washington State Department of Ecology

## History

- In 1955, the Sewer Utility was created.
- In 1958 voters created Metro, which took over operation of the City’s large trunk sewers. In 1994, King County assumed Metro’s responsibilities. Currently, King County has an additional 39 CSO outfalls in the City of Seattle and a Consent Decree with DOJ, EPA, and Ecology.

## Interesting Facts

- Seattle is one of 34 jurisdictions using King County’s regional wastewater treatment plants.
- Most Seattle wastewater is treated at King County’s West Point Treatment Plant.

# DRAINAGE

## Facts and Figures

- 485 miles of storm drains, 295 storm drain outfalls
- 20,000 catch basins that convey stormwater into storm drains
- 43.6 miles of creeks within city limits
- 59.3 miles of ditches, 46.2 miles of culverts
- 7.5 miles of green stormwater infrastructure (~1,100 rain gardens and bioretention swales)
- 185 flow control facilities, 18 detention/treatment ponds
- 400 water quality structures

## Business Structure

- SPU is the lead department for capital improvement, operation and maintenance of the stormwater drainage system in Seattle. SPU responds to pollution spills and inspects privately owned stormwater drainage systems and business activities to prevent pollution from entering stormwater.
- We provide extensive outreach and education programs to schools, communities, and businesses.
- Our service area does not extend beyond the city limits.

## Revenue and Rates

- Drainage Service Revenue in 2019: \$308 million
- Rates are based on the size of a property and the percent of the property’s surface that is impervious to drainage.
- Drainage charges appear as a Surface Water Management fee on King County property tax statements.

## Drainage in Seattle

**From:** Stormwater runoff (rain and melted snow)...

**To:** Creeks, lakes, the Duwamish Waterway, Puget Sound.

## Major Capital Projects

**Total Drainage adopted budget: \$102 million**

- South Park Flood Control Pump Station and Drainage Conveyance
- 12th Avenue Sanitary Sewer Overflow & Drainage Improvements
- Natural Drainage Systems Longfellow Creek
- Natural Drainage Systems Thornton Creek
- Lower Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement
- Duwamish Waterway and Gasworks Park Sediment Remediation
- \$432 million in Capital Projects planned (2019-2024)

## Major Regulators

- Washington State Department of Ecology
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

## History

- In 1986, Seattle City Council expanded the responsibilities of the existing Sewer Utility to include drainage, forming the Drainage and Wastewater Utility (DWU).

## Interesting Facts

- 75% of Seattle’s 36 inches of annual precipitation falls between October and March.
- SPU pioneered the Natural Drainage Systems approach to sustainable drainage infrastructure.



**Seattle  
Public  
Utilities**

Just the Facts – January 2020

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